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ABSTRACT

A study was undertaken in northwestern Wisconsin in 1974 to investigate whether the population turnaround in the 19-county area was an indication of people moving according to residential preference, as might be assumed from national surveys showing desire for urban to rural migration and higher rate of population growth in nonmetropolitan areas. Interviews were conducted with 1,523 adult residents, 20% of whom were classified as recent migrants because they had lived five years or less in the current county. Migrants averaged two more years of schooling than long-term residents, had approximately the same median income, and were more or less equally divided between white collar and blue collar occupations. Data showed less than half of the migrants moved to their preferred type of place (size of place, location relative to a large city), though subgroups, particularly the young middle age group and married couples with families, had apparently moved to meet preferences. Individual preference tended to change with age, length of residence, and family status, and therefore may influence migration decisions more at certain stages in life. Further studies on the basis for preference and the relationship between preference and migration were indicated if surveys of residential preferences are to be used to set policy or predict future growth patterns. (RS)

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RESIDENTIAL PREFERENCES AND THE POPULATION TURNAROUND IN NONMETROPOLITAN AREAS: A CASE STUDY IN NORTHWESTERN WISCONSIN

by

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Residential Preferences and the Population Turnaround in Nonmetropolitan Areas: A Case Study in Northwestern Wisconsin

Surveys of residential preferences in the United States consistently find a widespread desire to move out of large metropolitan centers to rural areas and small towns.[1] These surveys have been posed both as predictors of future population growth patterns (e.g., Zuiches and Fuguitt, 1972; Lee et al, 1971), and as tools to establish population distribution policies which will maximize individual preferences (Mazie and Rawlings, 1972; Hansen, 1973a). The assumption is made that the statement of a preference for a type of residence different from the present residence is an indication of a possible move.

Under this assumption, recent population estimates showing that nonmetropolitan population is increasing at a higher rate than metropolitan population, seem to indicate an acceleration in movement according to preferences. The purpose of this paper is to examine, on the individual level, the relationship between residential preference and recent migration in a growing nonmetropolitan area. Using survey data from northwestern Wisconsin, the paper is concerned with the extent to which movement in the region may be a response to residential preferences, and with the broader question of the relationship between individual preferences and migration.

As a background to the discussion, the paper presents first a description of the region and its recent migrants. Second, it considers the residential preferences of the migrants and the relationship to

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[1] For documentation of previous research as well as discussions of two recent surveys see Mazie and Rawlings (1972) and Fuguitt and Zuiches (1975).

recent residence changes. A migrant is assumed to have moved according to his/her preference if preferred and actual residence are the same. Particular attention is focused on migrants from outside the region and on those who have moved from large cities. Assuming that the likelihood of following through on preferences varies with the options and constraints facing the individual, differences by demographic characteristics in movement according to preferences are also examined. As a point of reference, comparisons are drawn between recent migrants and longterm residents of the region.

Data

The Upper Great Lakes "cutover" region, which includes northwestern Wisconsin, is one of the areas cited as significant in the recent nonmetropolitan population turnaround (Beale and Fuguitt, 1975; Hansen, 1973b, Beale, 1975). Following almost 50 years of stable or declining population, estimates show that all but two of the counties in northern Wisconsin have grown since 1970, some of them substantially above the rate for the state as a whole. The survey from which the data are drawn was conducted in late 1974, in nine counties of northwestern Wisconsin.[1] The counties were selected to represent the 19 counties in the northwest and west central agricultural districts of the state. This area is bounded on the west by Minnesota, with Minneapolis-St. Paul at the southwest corner, and on the north by Lake Superior. The city of

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[1] The focus of the survey, under the supervision of Professor Eugene A. Wilkening, is "Personal Well-being as Related to Environment and Development."

The nine counties included in the sample are Bayfield, Clark, Douglas, Dunn, Eau Claire, Polk, Price, Taylor and Washburn.

Eau Claire, the largest in the sample region (population 1974; 44,902) lies in the southeast corner. As of 1970, only Douglas County, in the extreme northwest, was classified as metropolitan (Duluth-Superior, SMSA).

A multi-stage area probability sample design was used to select a sample of housing units from the 19-county area. A respondent was then selected from within each sample housing unit using the Kish selection procedure (Kish, 1949).[1] Sampling and personal interviews were done by the Wisconsin Survey Research Laboratory.

Interviews were completed with 1423 adult permanent residents. Of these, 290 respondents (20%) are considered as recent migrants, with 5 years or less of residence in the current county. For the most part, returnees are not included among the recent migrants. If a person lived in a particular county, moved elsewhere for a time, and returned to the same county since 1970, the time both before and after the moves is recorded in total length of residence. Persons living more than 5 years in a county are considered as longterm residents.[2]

The central question addressed by the paper is the extent to which recent movement in the region is in accordance with individual residential preferences. Following the lead of Fuguitt and Zuiches (1972; 1975), two aspects of preference are included, both size of place and location relative to a large city. Respondents were asked:

> "If you could live in any size community you wanted to, would you prefer a large metropolitan city like Minneapolis-St. Paul, a smaller metropolitan city like Superior-Duluth or Eau Claire, a medium-sized city like Chippewa Falls or Menomonie, a small city, a village, or in a rural area?"

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[1] Weighing by county strata has been used in the tabulations.

[2] Six of the longterm residents who did not respond to the question of residential preferences are not included.

In addition, those who did not mention metropolitan cities as their preference were asked if they would prefer to live within about 30 miles of a large city.

Four size categories are used for place of residence, previous residence and residential preference. Because of the wording of the question, the cities of Eau Claire and Superior are included with cities of more than 50,000 people as large cities. The second category, "medium-size city," refers to places with populations of 10,000 to 50,000.[1] "Small city or village" includes cities with population of less than 10,000 and name places with population of less than 2500.[2] The fourth category is rural open country. A distance of 30 miles from a large city is measured as road distance from the center of the MCD of residence to the boundary of a large city (Minneapolis-St. Paul, Eau Claire, or Superior-Duluth).[3]

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[1] Respondents were drawn from only one city in this category, Menomonie, with a population (1975) of about 10,000.

[2] Because of the long period of population decline in northwestern Wisconsin there is no clear population-size difference between villages and cities. Some places which are called "cities" have populations of less than 1000, while some villages exceed 2500. It is unclear what size of place a respondent prefers if he/she mentions one of these categories. Because of this conceptual problem these two types are combined into one category.

[3] This a more inclusive area than was used in previous studies (Zuiches and Fuguitt, 1972; Fuguitt and Zuiches, 1975). In some cases it extends beyond the designated metropolitan areas. The effect of this broader measure is to strengthen the relationship between actual and preferred residence, especially for the recent migrants.

Two of the counties closest to the Twin Cities, which have exhibited rapid growth since 1960 (St. Croix and Pierce counties), are not included in the sample. It is possible that the survey underestimates recent migration into areas within a 30 mile radius of large cities, and the movement of former city residents to this peripheral region.

Description of the Region

Northwestern Wisconsin is a sparsely settled region. Only 33 percent of the population is in cities (population of 2500 or more), and the two largest cities (Superior and Eau Claire) together account for 16 percent of the 1975 population.

The initial settlement and subsequent population decline in the region were closely tied to lumbering activities which began around the middle of the 1800's, and virtually terminated by the 1920's. In the northernmost counties, the population peak was reached in 1920, and except for a brief period of stability during the 1930's, declined until 1970. Recreation, shipping and agriculture characterize this area.

Following the demise of lumbering, population levels remained more or less stable in the southern part of the region, despite reductions in the rural population after 1940. Dairying forms the economic base of these counties, and the City of Eau Claire has become an important trade and service center.

Beginning in the 1960's and continuing since 1970, there has been a shift in the overall pattern of decline. Population estimates for 1975,[1] show that the 19-counties taken as a whole have increased in population by 5.5 percent since 1970, while the state grew by only 3.7 percent. Five of the counties increased by more than 10 percent. Most of the growth is occurring outside of the cities with 90 percent of the gain occurring in rural areas and in villages of less than 2500 people. For the first time in decades a majority of the counties in the region are experiencing net in-migration.

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[1] Population estimates are taken from the final estimates for 1974 and 1975 from the State of Wisconsin, Department of Administration.

Studies have pointed to various structural features associated with the turnaround in population in the region (see Hansen, 1973b; Beale and Fuguitt, 1975; Erickson and Huddleston, 1975). Interstate highways which connect the Chicago-Milwaukee and the Duluth-Superior areas to the Twin Cities facilitate access between the region and the metropolitan areas, improving commuting, and accelerating the growth of the recreation industry in the northern counties. Increased settlement by retired people has accompanied the development of recreation. New employment opportunities are provided by small process-based manufacturing in the cities and villages and by four branches of the University of Wisconsin system located in the region.

Description of the Recent Migrants

The dominant pattern of migration in the region since 1970, has been urban to rural moves (Table 1). Half of the migrants formerly lived in cities of 10,000 or more, a third in metropolitan centers (50,000 or more). More than half of these former city dwellers have moved to the rural areas of the region. Movement in the opposite direction also has occurred but it is less significant in terms of the total number of migrants. Forty-seven percent of the former rural residents have gone to small cities or villages; forty-one percent of those from small cities and villages have moved to larger cities. For the total sample, 45 percent of the recent migrants have moved to rural areas, 27 percent to small cities or villages, 11 percent to medium-sized cities and 17 percent are living in Superior or Eau Claire.

Almost all of the recent migrants (92%) came from within the North Central Region of the United States. As shown in Table 2, about a third moved within northwestern Wisconsin, a third entered from elsewhere

Table 1. Percentage Distribution of Present Residence of Recent Migrants by Size of Place of Previous Residence

Present Residence	All Migrants	Size of Place of Previous Residence: Large City	Medium-size City	Small City or Village	Rural
Large City	16	15	12	27	10
Within 30-miles of large city					
Medium-size City	11	10	13	14	8
Small City or Village	4	7	0	4	2
Rural	10	7	11	11	11
More than 30-miles of large city					
Small City or Village	23	12	29	14	45
Rural	36	49	35	30	24
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
(N)	(290)	(95)	(49)	(83)	(63)

Table 2. Percentage Distribution of Size of Place of Previous Residence by County of Previous Residence for Recent Migrants

Size of Place of Previous Residence	County of Previous Residence[1]				All Migrants
	Short Distance Migrants		Long Distance Migrants		
	Co. Adjacent to Co. of Pres. Resid.	Other NW Co. or Co. Adjacent to Reg.	Other Wis. Co. not adjacent to Reg.	Co. not in Wis., not adjacent to Reg.	
Large City	16	20	43	46	33
Medium-size City	7	17	19	23	17
Small City or Village	30	46	21	24	28
Rural	47	17	17	7	22
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	80 (28%)	46 (16%)	64 (22%)	99 (34%)	289 (100%)

[1] One non-response on county of previous residence.

in Wisconsin, and the remainder migrated from outside the state. The majority of those from an adjacent county or from other counties in or adjoining the region (short distance migrants) formerly lived in villages or rural areas. In contrast, two-thirds of those who have moved into the region from non-adjacent counties of Wisconsin or other states (long distance migrants), came from cities of 10,000 or more. Nearly half of them left metropolitan centers.

Compared to the longterm residents of the region, the recent migrants are young and relatively well-educated (Table 3). Long distance migrants tend to have more years of schooling and somewhat higher incomes than those moving within the region or from adjacent counties.

The mean age of 35.6 years for migrants contrasts to 51.9 years among the longterm residents, reflecting the extended period of out-migration from the region. Nearly two-thirds of the newcomers are less than 35 years old. Migrants in the middle age groups (35 to 49 and 50 to 64 years old), the majority of whom moved from outside the region, make up an additional 28 percent. Eleven percent of the recent migrants are retired.[1] Seventy percent are married and about half have moved with children under 18 years old.[2]

The high proportion of young people among the migrants is evident in the level of educational attainment. Almost half have had at least

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[1] Respondents are considered to be retired if: (1) they call themselves "retired;" or, (2) are married women over age 50 and head-of-household is not in the labor force.

[2] A person is considered to be "married if the spouse is living in the household. "Single" includes never "married," widowed, divorced and separated.

Table 3. Percentage Distribution of Demographic Characteristics for Recent Migrants by Distance of Migration,[1] and for Longterm Residents of the Region

Characteristics	Recent Migrants			Longterm Residents
	All Migrants	Short Distance	Long Distance	
	(N=290)	(N=126)	(N=163)	(N=1127)
Age (in years)				
18 to 34	63	70	58	23
35 to 49	18	12	23	20
50 to 64	10	9	11	30
65 or more	9	9	8	57
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Sex				
Male	46	43	48	47
Female	54	57	52	53
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Family Status				
Single	50	33	28	30
(children at home)	(5)	(4)	(6)	(5)
(no children at home)	(25)	(29)	(22)	(25)
Married	70	67	72	70
(children at home)	(43)	(37)	(48)	(37)
(no children at home)	(27)	(30)	(24)	(33)
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Education(yrs at school completed)				
Less than 12	18	22	14	45
High school graduate	34	35	35	37
More than 12	48	43	51	18
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Family Income (doilars last year)				
Less than $5,000	23	29	18	25
$5,000 to $9,999	26	28	25	32
$10,000 to $15,999	36	32	39	28
$16,000 or more	15	11	18	15
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 3 con'd

Characteristics	Recent Migrants: All Migrants	Recent Migrants: Short Distance	Recent Migrants: Long Distance	Longterm Residence
Occupation[2] (head-of-household)				
High white collar	37	28	44	22
Low white collar	11	11	10	11
Craft	16	19	14	18
Low blue collar	28	29	28	29
Farmer	8	13	4	20
Total (N)	100% (237)	100% (103)	100% (134)	100% (769)

[1]Short distance migrants moved from an adjacent county, another county in the NW region or a county adjacent to the region. Long distance migrants moved from Wisconsin and other states, counties not adjacent to the region.

[2]Excludes non-response and retired.

some post-high school education. The mean years of school completed is 12.8 years, as compared to 10.8 years for longterm residents.

The majority of the recent migrants are in the middle income groups, the median falling around $10,000. The comparison to longterm residents shows only small differences, although a somewhat higher percentage of longterm residents report incomes of less than $10,000.

The migrants are more or less equally divided between white collar and blue collar occupations.[1] The major distinctions between longterm residents and recent migrants are a higher proportion of recent migrants in high white collar occupations and a lower proportion in farming. Only 8 percent of the migrants represent farm families as compared to 20 percent of the longterm residents.

Residential Preference

A person's residential preference is assumed to indicate choice of residence in the absence of economic considerations or other mitigating circumstances affecting migration decisions and location. While it is possible to point to structural conditions such as increased employment opportunities which are associated with the recent growth in nonmetropolitan areas like northwestern Wisconsin, the additional in-migration may also presage a new trend in individual migration decisions in which

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[1] Occupation as coded here is the occupation of the respondent unless the respondent is a married woman, in which case it is the occupation of her husband. High white collar occupations include managers, proprietors and professionals. Low white collar includes clerical workers, sales workers, etc. Craft refers to skilled manual laborers, low blue collar to unskilled manual laborers, and farmers, to both farm owners and managers and farm workers. Information on occupation was not ascertained for 20 of the recent migrants and for 31 of the longterm residents. These people have been omitted in the calculations. Retired people are maintained as a separate category.

increased importance is given to non-economic factors (Beale, 1975). Such a change should be reflected in recent migration according to preferences.

The distributions of actual residence and residential preference for the total sample, longterm residents and recent migrants are presented in Table 4. These marginals emphasize the nonmetropolitan nature of the sample.

The proportion favoring a residence in a large city is small in this sample (16%) when compared to other studies,[1] reflecting the fact that the preference for large cities tends to be highest among residents of these places. Although the majority of the northwest Wisconsin residents who do not prefer a large city would like to be within 30 miles of a city, the percentage chosing to live farther away is higher here (41%) than nationally (19%, Fuguitt and Zuiches, 1975), or in Wisconsin as a whole (31%, Zuiches and Fuguitt, 1972).

In addition, the question of location appears to be less relevant in this region than nationally since a higher proportion of the respondents have no preference on distance from a large city.[2] Given the sparseness of population in the region and the fact that the "large cities" referenced are relatively small, preference by size of place may be a better indication of migration according to preferences than it would be in a

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[1] See for example: Zuiches and Fuguitt (1972), in Wisconsin, preference for large city or suburb, 21%; Fuguitt and Zuiches (1975), in a national sample, preference for city over 50,000, 25%; Mazie and Rawlings, in a national sample, preference for large or medium-size city and suburbs, 35%.

[2] About 4 percent of the national sample (Fuguitt and Zuiches, 1975) responded "don't know" or "don't care," as contrasted to 10.2 percent in the current study (11.9% of the longterm residents and 3.4% of the recent migrants). Respondents who "don't know" or "don't care" have been assigned a preference consistent with their actual residence. For the total sample, 76 percent of this group are living outside the 30-mile radius.

Table 4. Percentage Distributions of Actual and Preferred Residence by Size of Place and Location Relative to Large City for Total Sample, Longterm Residents and Recent Migrants

Type of Residence	Total Sample		Longterm Residents		Recent Migrants	
	Actual	Preferred	Actual	Preferred	Actual	Preferred
Large Metropolitan City	--	2	--	1	--	6
Smaller Metropolitan City	16	14	15	13	16	16
Sub-total	16	16	15	14	16	22
Within 30-miles of Large City						
Medium Size City	6	6	5	6	11	8
Small City or Village	3	16	3	16	4	13
Rural	11	21	11	20	10	25
Sub-total	20	43	17	42	25	46
More than 30-miles from Large City						
Medium Size City	--	3	--	4	--	3
Small City or Village	24	15	25	16	23	10
Rural	40	23	41	24	36	19
Sub-total	64	41	66	44	59	32
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
(N)	(1417)		(1127)		(290)	

more urbanized environment.[1] The preference for large cities and for locations within a 30 mile radius of the city is highest among the recent migrants.

For the migrants as a group, the distribution of actual residence is similar to that of preference, particularly in terms of size of place. The proportion favoring a location more than 30 miles from a large city is lower than the percentage who actually have moved to these areas. Almost all of the recent migrants have satisfied their preferences in the sense that only 6 percent want to live in large metropolitan centers, of which there are none in the region.

Focusing on the relationship between individual preference and migration, the most direct indication of migration according to preference is provided by asking whether or not actual residence (destination of move) and preferred residence are the same. The percentage of recent migrants living in the preferred type of place is shown in Table 5. Percentages for the total sample and for the longterm residents of the region, as well as findings of previous Wisconsin and national surveys are given as standards for comparison. If recent migration has been according to preference, the percentage for recent migrants should be high relative to these other measures.

Although as residents of a nonmetropolitan area, people in northwestern Wisconsin are more likely to be living in the preferred type of place than is the U.S. or Wisconsin population in general, the results obtained here are similar to those for other studies if residents of large metropolitan centers and suburbs are not considered. For the total

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[1] Size of place may be a more important factor than location elsewhere also. Fuguitt and Zuiches (1975) asked respondents nationally to rank preferences. Although the majority of those wanting to live outside a large city prefer to live within a 30-mile radius, the most pervasive second choice was a more distant location.

Table 5. Percentage of Northwest Wisconsin Residents Living in the Preferred Type of Place and Comparisons to Other Surveys

	Percentage Living in Preferred Type of Place		
	Size of Place and Location Relative to Large City	Size of Place Only	Location Only
Northwest Wisconsin			
Total Sample	48	70	59
Longterm Residents	51	73	60
Recent Migrants	39	59	53
Fuguitt and Zuiches			
National Sample (1975)	42		
National Sample (omitting large city and suburban residents)	46	62	
Wisconsin Sample (1972)	33		
Wisconsin Sample (omitting large city and suburban residents)	37	62	
Mazie and Rawlings			
National Sample (1972)		48	
National Sample (omitting large city residents)		68	

sample, 48 percent are living in both the size of place they prefer and at the preferred distance from a large city. Sixty-nine percent are satisfied with the size of place independent of distance from a city.

The residents of this area are more likely to be living where they prefer than were respondents in other surveys (and differences in question wording make this comparison tenuous), but it is the longterm residents and not the newcomers who are most satisfied. Those who have moved to their residence during the last five years are less likely to prefer that type of place than are those who have lived there longer, both in terms of size of place and in terms of location relative to a large city. Only 39 percent of the recent migrants have moved to the preferred type of place (size and location), while more than half of the longterm residents (51%) prefer their present situation.

This suggests that length of residence, in and of itself, may have a bearing on residential preference. Further breakdowns of the sample by length of residence (Table 6) emphasize the strength of this relationship. The longer a person has lived in a particular place, the more likely he/she is to name that type of place as preferred. The pattern is constant across both size of place and location relative to a large city, but the differences are greatest by size of place. In general, except for those 35 to 49 years old, the relationship holds up across age groups.

Within group differences which account for the lower percentages among recent migrants are shown in Table 7. The diagonals in the table are the percentages of people living in a particular place who name that type of place as preferred. The size and location components are considered separately in Table 8.

Table 6. Percentage Living in the Preferred Type of Place by Length of Residence[1]

Length of Residence (years)	Percent Living in Preferred Place: Size of Place and Location Relative to Large City	Size of Place Only	Location Only	(N)
2 years or less	37	57	53	(176)
3 to 5 years	41	62	54	(114)
6 to 10 years	48	71	55	(107)
11 to 19 years	51	66	61	(131)
20 years or more	51	74	60	(876)
Total Sample	48	70	59	(1404)

Percentage Living in the Preferred Type of Place by Length of Residence and Age[2]

	Age							
	18-34		35-49		50-64		65+	
Length of Residence	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)
0 to 5 years	37	(182)	54	(53)	37	(29)	26	(25)
6 to 19 years	44	(84)	50	(59)	43	(52)	68	(44)
20 years or more	44	(164)	48	(162)	49	(289)	61	(261)
Total Sample	41	(430)	49	(274)	47	(370)	59	(330)

[1]Thirteen respondents are omitted because they moved within the county during the last 5 years and total length of residence in the county could not be ascertained.

[2]Categories were combined in order to get a minimum N of 25 in each cell.

The general picture which emerges from these tables is that regardless of size of place or location, recent migrants are less likely than longterm residents to name that type of place as preferred. The one exception is the high level of satisfaction with rural living among rural residents. Seventy-three percent of the recent migrants who have moved to rural areas prefer to live there.[1]

Two specific differences between the groups stand out. First, recent migrants living in medium-size cities and small cities or villages are much less likely than longterm residents to name them as preferred. Less than half of those moving to the small towns in the last five years want to be there. The majority would rather live in larger places. Second, recent migrants who are not satisfied with their location relative to a large city would prefer to move into large cities and the surrounding area, while longterm residents would rather move farther away from the cities.

Under the assumption that a migrant has moved according to preference if preferred and actual residence are the same, and that a preference different from actual residence is an indication of intended or possible migration, the comparisons presented show that in general, recent migration in northwestern Wisconsin is not a response to residential preferences. As nonmetropolitan residents, people in northwestern Wisconsin are more likely to be living in the preferred type of place than is the U.S. population overall, but within the region, longterm residents are more likely to be satisfied with their place of residence

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[1] A majority of the recent migrants and of the longterm residents in large cities prefer large cities. This finding is difficult to interpret because as a preference "large city" includes all places over 50,000. The large cities included in the sample are relatively small by this standard. The high level of satisfaction implied here may also reflect the specific cities referenced in the question of preferences.

Table 7. Percentage Distribution of Actual Residence by Preferred Residence for Longterm Residents and Recent Migrants

Longterm Residents

Preferred Residence	Actual Residence: Within 30 Miles: Large City	Medium-Size City	Small City or Village	Rural	More Than 30 Miles: Small City or Village	Rural
Large City	68	3	16	8	4	3
Within 30 Miles of Large City						
Medium Size	1	50	0	2	7	3
Small City	14	11	41	10	28	10
Rural	12	8	6	55	7	25
More than 30 Miles from Large City						
Medium City	0	25	7	2	4	3
Small City	0	3	24	3	46	9
Rural	5	0	6	20	4	47
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
(N)	(173)	(57)	(33)	(123)	(276)	(465)

Recent Migrants

Preferred Residence	Actual Residence: Within 30 Miles: Large City	Medium-Size City	Small City or Village	Rural	More than 30 Miles: Small City or Village	Rural
Large City	59	40	29	10	17	5
Within 30 Miles of Large City						
Medium Size	8	30	0	6	8	3
Small City	11	10	24	8	27	7
Rural	18	10	36	59	8	32
More than 30 Miles from Large City						
Medium City	4	10	0	0	4	1
Small City	0	0	11	4	20	12
Rural	0	0	0	13	16	40
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
(N)	(48)	(32)	(12)	(28)	(66)	(104)

Table 8. Percentage Distribution of Actual Residence by Preferred Residence for Longterm Residents and Recent Migrants, Size of Place and Location Relative to a Large City

Size of Place

Length of Residence

Preferred Residence	Longterm Residents: Actual Residence				Recent Migrants: Actual Residence			
	Large City	Medium City	Small City	Rural	Large City	Medium City	Small City	Rural
Large City	68	3	6	4	59	40	19	6
Medium Size City	1	75	10	5	12	40	10	4
Small City or Village	14	14	73	18	11	10	45	17
Rural	17	8	11	73	18	10	26	73
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
(N)	(173)	(57)	(309)	(588)	(48)	(32)	(78)	(132)

Location Relative to Large City

Length of Residence

Preferred Residence	Longterm Residents: Actual Residence			Recent Migrants: Actual Residence		
	Large City	Within 30 Miles	More Than 30 Miles	Large City	Within 30 Miles	More Than 30 Miles
Large City	68	8	3	59	27	10
Within 30 Miles of Large City	27	65	40	37	60	42
More than 30 Miles from Large City	5	27	57	4	13	48
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
(N)	(173)	(213)	(741)	(48)	(72)	(78)

than are the recent migrants. Two exceptions have been noted, namely, the low preference for large metropolitan centers, and the strong preference for rural areas among rural residents.

However, the relationship between length of residence and the probability of naming actual residence as preferred, which duplicates an earlier finding of Dillman and Dobash (1972),[1] suggests that the initial assumption may be over-simplified. A preference different from actual residence may also be a measure of integration into a community or of ties to a place of residence. Dillman and Dobash, in a study of preferences in the state of Washington, have shown that the greater the socialization into a community life style (measured as amount of experience in a type of community) and the greater the investment in the community of residence (measured as number of organizational memberships and leadership positions, employment status, length of residence, etc.), the less likely a person is to want to move to a different type of place. In addition, Lansing and Mueller (1967) have noted an apparent period of adjustment upon entering a new community. It takes from 3 to 5 years before a person reports that most of his close friends live in that community, and those whose friends live in the community are less likely to want to move.

If residential preference is a reflection of ties to a place of residence, then a preference different from actual residence may be as much an indicator of a recent move as of intended or possible migration.

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[1] The relationship to length of residence may be greater in this data than in a broader population sample. Dillman and Dobash found the most variance by length of residence in the likelihood of naming actual residence as preferred among respondents in nonmetropolitan areas.

Further, as recent migrants become longterm residents, residential preference may change and the percent preferring the current residence should increase.[1]

The relationship between length of residence and preference does not necessarily preclude the possibility that migration increases the correspondence between actual and preferred residence for those who move. Residential preference may respond to a number of individual factors, including integration into a community, intentions of moving and the desire to live in a particular type of environment. However, to the extent that preference reflects ties to a place of residence, the comparison of longterm residents and migrants may distort the evaluation of the extent to which recent migration is based on preferences. Variations among migrants by previous residence and by demographic characteristics, take some of these individual factors into account and suggest qualifications to the broad statement that migrants are not moving according to preference.

Previous Residence

Major attention on the role of preferences in nonmetropolitan growth is focused on movement out of large cities into rural areas and small towns, and migration into nonmetropolitan regions from the outside. Table 9, showing the percentage of recent migrants living in the preferred type of place by county of previous residence and size of place of previous residence, suggests that residential preference may be in part responsible for recent urban to rural migration.

Migrants from outside the region, and particularly those from outside the state of Wisconsin are more likely to be living in the

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[1] This interpretation is particularly interesting in the case of recent migrants to small towns, in contrast to those moving to large cities or rural areas. Integration into a community is likely to be most relevant in small communities.

Table 9. Percentage of Recent Migrants Living in the Preferred Type of Place by County of Previous Residence[1] and by Size of Place of Previous Residence

County of Previous Residence	Percent Living in Preferred Place: Size of Place and Location	Size of Place Only	Location Only	(N)
County Adjacent to County of Current Residence	37	64	49	(80)
Other NW County or County Adjacent to the Region but not Adjacent to Current County	29	46	35	(46)
Other County of Wisconsin not Adjacent to Region	34	57	51	(64)
Other County, not Wisconsin and not Adjacent to Region	47	63	66	(99)
Size of Place of Previous Residence				
Large City	50	65	67	(95)
Medium Size City	37	67	50	(49)
Small City or Village	31	50	45	(83)
Rural	34	58	46	(63)
All Recent Migrants	39	59	53	(290)

[1] One non-response on county of previous residence.

preferred type of place than migrants within the region or from counties adjacent to the region. The correspondence between actual and preferred residence is highest for the migrants from large cities the majority of whom moved into the region from the outside.[1] Both migration from outside the region and from large cities is dominated by urban to rural moves.

Migration according to preference is also indicated by the fact that migrants are more likely to be living in the preferred size of place after they have moved than they were before (Table 10). Twenty-four percent were satisfied with the previous size of place while 59 percent are satisfied with the present size of place. A fifth of the migrants lived in the same size of place before and after the move. For those who changed size of place, 58 percent have moved to the preferred place, and only 14 percent prefer the size of their previous residence.[2] Migrants from large cities are most likely to have improved on satisfaction of preferences through migration. (Half of those who would prefer to live in their previous size of place are also migrants from large cities, however.)

Demographic Characteristics

Differences by demographic characteristics reflect individual circumstances which are related to both migration and residential

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[1] In part, the satisfaction of former large city residents reflects the fact that the preference for living more than 30 miles from a large city is higher than for other migrants. The preference for living close to a city decreases as size of place of previous residence increases. The percent preferring residence within 30 miles of a large city by size of place of previous residence is: large city, 30%; medium-size city, 43%; small city or village, 58%; rural, 56%.

[2] For the remaining 28 percent preference does not correspond to either present or past residence.

Table 10. Percentage of Recent Migrants Living in Preferred Size of Place Before and After Migration by Size of Place of Previous Residence and Change in Size of Place

Size of Place of Previous Residence	(N)	Percent Who Prefer Size of Previous Residence	Percent Who Prefer Size of Present Residence
Large City	(95)	24	65
Medium Size City	(49)	7	67
Small City or Village	(83)	20	50
Rural	(63)	42	58
Migrants Who Did not Change Size of Place	(58)	63	63
Migrants Who Changed Size of Place	(232)	14	58
All Migrants	(290)	24	59

preference. Whether or not a person moves to the preferred type of residence may depend on the importance attached to non-economic factors in migration decisions and on the options or constraints facing the individual in choice of residence. Both situations vary by life cycle stage and socio-economic characteristics.[1]

In addition, previous studies have shown that preferences differ by individual characteristics. The desire to live in rural areas and small towns, and in nonmetropolitan regions in general, is highest among people over age 35 and among those in blue collar occupations and those without advanced education (see e.g., Lee et al, 1971; Friedman, 1974; Dillman and Dobash, 1972; Zuiches and Fuguitt, 1972). Zuiches and Fuguitt (1972) also found that if population distributions in Wisconsin were adjusted to match preferences, these groups would predominate among migrants from metropolitan to nonmetropolitan areas. To the extent that recent migration in northwestern Wisconsin is in response to preferences, movement according to preferences should be higher for these groups than for others.[2]

Table 11 shows the percentage of recent migrants who have moved to the preferred type of residence (both size and location) by age, sex, family status, education, family income, and occupation head-of-household. Differences within categories by distance of migration are given also.

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[1] For example, community characteristics may be more important for families with young children than for young single people. Persons in highly specialized professions are often restricted in residence choice by availability of jobs. The recent in-migration of retired people may be seen as a response to environmental amenities and recreational possibilities in the region.

[2] The correspondence between actual and preferred residence should also be high for farm families since farming is a rural occupation.

Table 11. Percentage of Recent Migrants Living in the Preferred Type of Place (Size and Location) by Demographic Characteristics and Distance of Migration[1]

	Percent Living in Preferred Place					
	All Recent Migrants	(N)	Short Distance Migrants	(N)	Long Distance Migrants	(N)
Age (in years)						
18 to 34	37	(182)	36	(88)	37	(94)
35 to 49	54	(54)	36	(15)	59	(38)
50 to 64	37	(29)	--		--	
65 or more	26	(25)	--		--	
All retired	35	(33)	--		--	
Sex						
Male	37	(133)	32	(54)	39	(78)
Female	41	(157)	36	(72)	45	(85)
Family Status						
Single	34	(87)	26	(42)	41	(45)
children at home	60	(14)	--		--	
no children at home	29	(73)	27	(37)	30	(36)
Married	41	(203)	38	(84)	43	(118)
children at home	44	(125)	40	(46)	46	(78)
no children at home	36	(78)	36	(38)	36	(40)
Education (years of school completed)						
Less than 12	30	(51)	25	(28)	35	(23)
High school graduate	43	(101)	37	(44)	47	(51)
More than 12	39	(138)	36	(54)	41	(83)
Family Income (dollars last year)						
Less than $5,000	41	(66)	32	(38)	53	(28)
$5,000 to $9,999	31	(76)	32	(35)	30	(41)
$10,000 to $15,999	41	(105)	35	(40)	45	(64)
$16,000 or more	44	(43)	--		--	
Occupation (head-of-household)[2]						
High white collar	36	(88)	31	(41)	39	(72)
Low white collar	38	(25)				
Craft	46	(39)	41	(48)	47	(57)
Low blue collar	44	(67)				
Farm	45	(19)	--		--	

[1] Short distance migrants moved from an adjacent county, another county in the NW region or a county adjacent to the region. Long distance migrants moved from Wisconsin and other states, counties not adjacent to the region. There is 1 non-response in county of previous residence.

[2] Excludes non-response and retired.

The preference for nonmetropolitan living appears to be a major factor in migration of those in the young middle age group (age 35 to 49), particularly for migrants into the region from the outside. The preferences of this group reflect a strong rural, nonmetropolitan bias. Fifty-four percent want to live more than 30 miles from a large city and 66 percent prefer a rural residence. When only size of place is considered more than three-fourths (77%) have moved to the preferred size of place, with the majority locating in rural areas (71%).

Migrants who are married and those who have children living at home are more likely to be living in the preferred type of place than are single people. While most of the single people are in the youngest age group (18 to 34 years old), sixty-five percent of those age 35 to 49 are married with children. Differences between men and women are minimal.

Although variation by education and occupation in the percentage living in the preferred type of place is not as large as in the case of age, the expected pattern is apparent, and again, suggests some migration according to preferences. Migrants who are high school graduates but have had no post-high school education, and those in blue collar or farming occupations are more likely than others to name their actual residence as preferred. These differences are most evident among long distance migrants and are constant across age groups.

Family income has no consistent relationship to the correspondence between actual and preferred residence, and in general, personal resources have little affect on migration according to preference. More schooling, greater income and higher status occupation do not mean that a person is more likely to be living in the preferred type of place.[1]

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[1] Nazie and Rawlings (1972) noted little variation by socio-economic characteristics in a person's expectations about whether he/she would eventually move to preferred size of place.

The extent to which differences among the migrants by age, education and occupation are a reflection of migration according to preference is clarified by comparisons to the longterm residents of the region (Table 12).

The contrasts between the two groups by age reiterate the strength of the correspondence between actual and preferred residence among migrants in the young middle age group. For longterm residents, the proportion living in the preferred type of residence increases with age. Migrants 35 to 49 years old are more likely to be living where they prefer than are the longterm residents in this age group.

The apparent importance of preferences in the migration of middle age migrants suggests that preferences may be a better indication of migration intentions at certain stages in the life cycle than at others. If a preference is a long range goal or ideal,[1] it should be more salient for those who have young families and are "settling down" than for younger migrants, many of whom are single and are likely to migrate again.[2] Improved employment opportunities may be a major factor in

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[1] Mazie and Rawlings (1972) found that while 48 percent of the population are actually living in the preferred size of place, an additional 32 percent expect to eventually move there. Only about 20 percent feel that they will never live in the preferred residence.

These findings seem to indicate that preference is a long range goal. However, there is no basis using the northwest data by which to ascertain whether preference is a long range goal or whether it changes during the life cycle. While the high correspondence between actual and preferred residence for those in the middle age group may mean that preferences are more important for this age group, the percentage may also reflect a stronger preference overall for nonmetropolitan areas among middle age people.

[2] The high satisfaction among longterm residents who are "single," in contrast to recent migrants who are "single," reflects an age difference. The majority of the longterm residents in this category are elderly.

Table 12. Percentage of Longterm Residents Living in Preferred Type of Place (Size and Location) by Demographic Characteristics

	Percent Living in Preferred Place	(N)
Age (in years)		
18-34	43	(256)
35-49	48	(221)
50-64	48	(342)
65 or more	62	(308)
All retired	61	(326)
Sex		
Male	53	(534)
Female	49	(593)
Family Status		
Single	57	(334)
Children at home	52	(49)
No children at home	58	(285)
Married	48	(793)
Children at home	49	(422)
No children at home	47	(371)
Education (years of school completed)		
Less than 12	55	(508)
High school graduate	45	(417)
More than 12	53	(202)
Family Income (dollars last year)		
Less than $5,000	58	(280)
$5,000 to $9,999	46	(357)
$10,000 to $15,999	51	(317)
$16,000 or more	48	(173)
Occupation[1] (head-of-household)		
High white collar	51	(168)
Low white collar	52	(82)
Craft	47	(141)
Low blue collar	41	(224)
Farm	47	(154)

[1] Excludes non-response and retired.

migration of young people (under 35 years old) in the region, while middle age migrants are not as prone to change residence merely to take advantage of new jobs, assuming that they will move again to a more desirable location. Lansing and Mueller (1967) Who have shown that migrants over age 35 are less likely than those under 35 years old to attribute migration to economic reasons alone, point to the fact that migration tends to be more "costly" for middle age migrants than for others, since a move by one person often involves an entire family.

Other comparisons between longterm residents and recent migrants, however, again point to the effect of ties to a place of residence (integration into a community) on the relationship between preference and actual residence.

The very low correspondence between actual and preferred residence for migrants age 65 and over and for retirees in general, suggests this interpretation. Retired people who move should have more options for migration than younger people since they have no children in school, are not restrained by the availability of jobs, etc. However, these same conditions may mean that entrance into a new community is more difficult. The breaking of ties in the previous community upon retirement and the lack of channels for making contacts in the new place of residence may be reflected in initial dissatisfaction with the new type of residence.

The relationship between actual and preferred residence by education and occupation may also be distorted by factors of integration. Taking account of the effect of age, among longterm residents, proportions living in the preferred type of place are highest for those with post-high school education and for those in white collar occupations. The

opposite pattern is found among recent migrants. To some extent this difference is due to migration according to preferences by blue collar workers and high school graduates, but it may also indicate effects over time of integration into the community. Persons with more education and higher status occupations have the resources to more readily establish ties and connections in the community (e.g., to buy homes, to take on leadership positions, etc.).

Conclusion

As a case study, the data presented from northwestern Wisconsin are useful for preliminary examination of the relationship between individual preferences and the recent population turnaround in nonmetropolitan areas, and as a means of investigating the basis for the statement of a preference and the conditions under which that preference may be translated into change of residence.

Assuming that a migrant has moved according to preference if preferred residence and actual residence (destination of move) correspond, it has been shown that, in general, recent migration in the region has not been according to preferences. Less than half of the migrants have moved to the preferred type of place (both size of place and location relative to a large city), and they are less likely than longterm residents of the region to name their actual residence as preferred. The likelihood of living in the preferred type of place increases with length of residence.

However, the desire to live in a nonmetropolitan environment may be important among sub-groups of migrants. Only a small proportion of those who have moved recently to the small towns of the region want to

live in these places, but preferences may be responsible in part for the recent growth in the region's rural population, and for movement into the region from large cities. The high correspondence between actual and preferred residence for migrants in the young middle age group and for those who are married and moving with families suggests that preferences may be a significant motivation for migration at this stage in the life cycle. Recent migrants in blue collar occupations and those who are high school graduates without post-high school education are also more likely than others to be satisfied with their new residences in the region. Family income has little effect on whether or not a person has moved to the preferred type of place.

The comparisons drawn show that while most of the recent migration in the region has not been according to preferences, a minority of the migrants probably have moved, at least in part, in order to live in a particular type of place. They also point to complexities in the interpretation of individual preferences. The statement of a preference may derive from a variety of individual circumstances of which intended or possible migration is only one.

The relationship between length of residence and preference, and the contrasts between longterm residents and recent migrants by socio-economic status suggest that a preference different from actual residence may be a reflection of lack of integration into a community, and therefore, as much an indicator of recent migration as of possible migration. Individual preferences may change with age, length of residence and family status, and they may be more salient to migration decisions at certain stages in the life cycle than at others.

A broader sample of migrants and a longtudinal study of preferences would be helpful in determining whether or not preferences vary for individuals over time, whether preferences are more salient in some individual circumstances than in others, and whether or not preferences are a more important consideration in movement to nonmetropolitan areas than in migration in general. Particular attention should be given to the relationship between preferences and community satifaction and other measures of ties to a community or place of residence. The basis for an individual statement of preference and the relationship of preference to individual migration merits further investigation if surveys of residential preferences are to be used in policy determination or in predicting future growth patterns.

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